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PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

1822-1844

Wilson A. Farnsworth

IN HONOR OF

Dr. and Mrs. Farnsworth's

Golden Wedding

1902

P 351

PRINTED BY THEIR CHILDREN

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Caravanserai near Beersheba 200 years old

Inji Soo, Turkey, Cappadocia, June 24, 1891.

My Dear Children:

You have asked me to improve such spare moments as I may find in jotting down some personal reminiscences. This seems hardly worth the doing. The thought of pleasing my dear children prompts me to comply with your request. Only spare moments, which are somewhat rare in my busy life, can be given to such work.

The recording of some things in a happy and busy life will, I am sure, afford me pleasure. That life has been attended unceasingly, by the guidance and blessing of the Heavenly Father. Would that it had better improved its grand opportunities!

I begin my pleasant task here in a coffee shop, with a large caravansery, some 220 years old, on one side of me and a pretty little mosque, with a very graceful minaret, on the other. Nellie, when here (Sept. 15, 1886), made the ascent of this minaret.

If tradition is to be trusted, I first appeared in this mundane sphere Aug. 29, 1822. James Monroe was then President of the U. S. A., and the population of the country was about ten millions. The place of my nativity is Greene, Chenango County, N. Y. That particular part of the township where my parents had made their home was known as "Plot Hill." How it came by such an evil name I never knew. My earliest recollections are of a very rude log hut, of one room, if I mistake not, and quite a portion of that was occupied by the bed where I took my nap in the day, and under which rolled my trundle bed. With a huge "back log" and a stout "forestick" and nice fine wood between, what a flood of light and heat came from the huge fireplace at one end of that room!

You may be interested in a few words about my parents. My father, Isaac Farnsworth, was born in Alstead, N. H., July 18, 1790. When quite young his father moved with his family to Thetford, Vt. Their home was a beautiful place on the west bank of the Connecticut River, just below the depot at E. Thetford. Here he spent his youth and squandered his school days. Fishing and hunting were much more enjoyable amusements in those very early days of the nineteenth century than they now are, while the log schoolhouse had few attractions. The result was that my father, though very skillful in catching the beautiful speckled trout had no skill in

writing. I remember him as painstaking, never noted for the rapidity of his work, but always for its perfection. The hill of potatoes that he hoed was rounded with peculiar grace. The ax helve, the ox goad, or the pudding stick, which was the result of a winter's evening's work with his jack-knife, was, to my childish vision, a marvel of mechanical skill. Some of his boys seem to have inherited this quality, and, with but little instruction, have developed into first-class mechanics. The only office, so far as I know, that he ever held, was that of drum major, and he was often called "Major Farnsworth," but he was generally known as "Uncle Isaac." I have been told by a woman who knew him in his youth that "he was the handsomest young man that attended church on Thetford Hill."

My mother was born in Monkton, Vt., Jan. 31, 1795. What advantages for education she enjoyed I do not know. I remember that she did the letter writing of the family and kept the accounts. Her parents, Ephraham Page and Priscilla (Raymond) Page, were natives of Connecticut, but moved to Vermont some years before it became a State. Eunice was the fifth of six children born to Ephraham and Priscilla.

Quite early in the nineteenth century both the Farnsworth and the Page family emigrated to what was then the wild Western country, Central New York. There Isaac and Eunice met, were mutually pleased, and were joined in wedlock, in Westmartend (that part of the town which afterwards received the name Lowell), Oneida County, N. Y., Sept. 1, 1817. They first attempted to establish a home at Lenox Lakes (a name which does not now appear), but after two or three years, made a new beginning at "Plot Hill," where I began this mortal life as related above. I was very young, probably not quite four years old, when the family left this home for another equally humble, in another part of the same township, Greene.

It was but a short time, less than a year, I think, after we made this move, before my father built what seemed to me a very fine "framed house." One of my earliest recollections is of an accident connected with the building of this home, and after, probably not less than sixty-five years, I remember it with sorrow, for I fear that I was the unwitting cause. A quantity of lumber was in the process of kiln drying for the new house. The entrance being very low, my father on one

occasion, sent me in to renew the fire. He watched me while I did so and thought that all was right. We went away quite out of sight of the kiln, and when we returned a few moments afterwards a black smoke showed that the boards were burning. This involved a loss that my father could not well carry.

That framed house! How wonderful it was! How large! Four rooms, as I recall it, on the first floor. How high! A story and a half, I think. Surely not more. When it was in a condition to be occupied, my cousin, a young man who had been brought up by my father, insisted upon having a "house warming." What a host of young men and young women there were there, and what a wonderful thing the dance with the fiddle was! As I look back to it now, I suppose there must have been ten or fifteen couples.

Not many months after entering this new and more convenient home death came and took a sister younger than myself. I remember some things connected with this affliction. I suppose I must have been six or seven years old. In connection with this there occurred one of those strange things that confound all our philosophy. A little girl about Maria's age (three years old) at the house of one of our neighbors was very sick with scarlet fever. Our mother watched with the little sufferer one night, and the next morning she took her little one in her lap and told her how sick poor little Phoebe was, and that she thought she would die. The next morning, when Maria awoke, she called out, in a merry way: "Mamma, mamma, Phoebe is dead, and I shall be dead pretty soon." My sister Mary, two years older than myself, heard this, and, bursting into tears, said she believed that it was true. Very soon word came that Phoebe was indeed dead, and in a few days little Maria followed her.

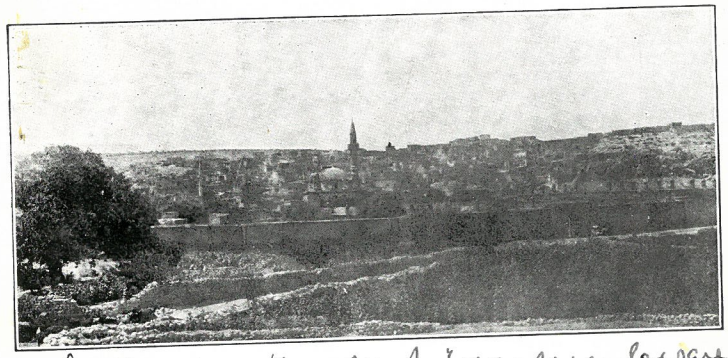
It was not very long after this event that my father took a stand as a Christian. Up to that time my mother, though, as I believe, a pious woman, was not a church member. Though her predilections were with the Baptists, as my father wished to join the Presbyterian Church, she readily consented to go with him. I well remember when my sister and I were baptized. We lived far from any church, and our religious privileges were by no means good. Though I can remember four different places where we resided before I was eleven years old, none of these places was near any regular place of worship.

My early school privileges were somewhat better than were my religious advantages, though they surely were poor enough. I suppose I must have been about seven years old when I first attended school, though I cannot recall the impression of those days.

You will be surprised to know that I have a physical defect as a consequence of an accident of my first day at school. I had not yet begun to attend school, but my sister took along her "wee bit brother," to let him see the wonders of school. At recess, when the children were playing see-saw, the end of the thumb of my right hand was caught between the board and the log, and I lost my thumb nail, and the one that succeeded it has a ridge in the middle quite unlike the other. To this day that thumb carries the mark of that first day at school.

It was when I was about seven or eight years old that my father presented me with a beautiful little ax. It might have been better had he given me a book. I was ambitious to wield this edged tool, and soon made a fearful gash in my left leg, which now shows a shining scar about one and a half inches long.

It was not far from this time that my father, on one occasion, felt under the necessity of inflicting upon me corporal punishment. The occasion was this. My cousin, alluded to above, had, somewhat reluctantly, entrusted to me his jackknife. For a time I enjoyed the Yankee's pleasure of whittling. The ground where my father and cousin were at work was covered with bushes and brush heaps, and as I wandered among them I saw a striped squirrel. It was a most natural impulse to throw what I had in my hand at the impudent little rogue. I supposed that I threw a stone. When the knife was called for it was not to be found, and my mind was a perfect blank as to its whereabouts. I was told that unless it was found I should be punished. Some time (I think three days) of grace were given. I was very confident that I should find it, but all my efforts were useless. I well remember that my father joined me in the search, but to no purpose. When hope had died and the time of grace had expired, my father said: "Well, Wilson, I must whip you. Will you have it now, or wait till morning?" I replied, "I think it would be better to have it now and have it over with." He took me outdoors and gave me a pretty thorough



dressing down. Still, I dare say that it hurt the good man worse than it did me. I thought afterwards that he was sorry that he had said that he should punish me. Having said that he very wisely kept his word. I do not think that, after that, he ever even threatened me.

Here

Though I cannot recall my earliest school days I do remember not less than three different district schools in different parts of the same township in which I attended school before I was eleven years old. This shows how unsettled was our home.

From the first I was rather fond of books and almost without exception had the good will of my teachers. One of the things that I recall very distinctly, of those early school days, is my sore disappointment at being too late for a certain lesson. I was employed by a neighbor to ride the horse in plowing his corn. He dismissed me to go to the lesson, but the class was dismissed just as I arrived. In my disappointment I cried. Some of my fellow pupils were disposed to laugh, but the teacher cheered me by saying that she wished they all had as much interest as I had.

I can now recall but one occasion when a teacher inflicted upon me any punishment, though there may have been others. Perhaps at that time I was nine years old. At that time the teacher was one of the very few of whom my recollections are not very pleasant. What offense I committed I am not quite sure. I think it was looking off my book, contrary to express orders. As a punishment he decided to give me a seat with the girls and asked them, "Who wants this boy." A very pretty, bright-eyed little girl roguishly replied, "I want him." It was a cold winter day, and the log school house was not warm. The little girl's seat was much more comfortable than mine. I cannot say whether the change was more of a punishment or a pleasure. I am sure that even then I appreciated the ludicrous side of it.

I suppose that my mother was a better financier than my father. I can just remember when he come home with a horse which he had received in exchange for a pair of oxen. I think that she was right in supposing that for heavy work in clearing land the exchange would not be helpful. From this time, however, for several years, "Old Poll," as the horse was called, was an important member of our barn yard. She was a docile, gentle creature and much admired, and made

herself very useful by pulling us all through the long journey of 150 miles, more or less, from Greene, N. Y., to Thetford, Vt.

Another much admired member of our circle was our dog "Ring." This name was given because of a streak of white about his neck. He was a large, good-natured fellow, but a mortal enemy of a handsome, but for one reason a very offensive, little animal then common in those regions, the "Mephitis America," familiarly known as the skunk. In his frequent encounters with this enemy he always came off conqueror, but for days after each victory he emitted such an offensive odor that it was hardly practicable to allow him his usual place in the family circle. There was another little animal then very common in those regions, the woodchuck (Arctomis Monax), of which old Ring was a famous hunter. I can well remember how he would track one of these animals to his burrow under some rock or amid the roots of some stump or tree, and dig away at the hole and bark furiously till my father would come and help him secure the game. Usually, by means of the pick and sometimes the cutting of a root or two the dog could reach him. Sometimes, to draw him from behind a root or stone, by which he was partially protected even when he could be seen, my father resorted to a ruse which I greatly admired. Taking a green stick a quarter of an inch or so in diameter and twisting it so as to make a pliable withe, and inserting one end of it into a noose, he would push it up to his head. When the animal snapped at it, as he was pretty sure to do, it was drawn up sharply, catching on the tusks or long teeth, and being unable to free himself from the noose, he was drawn out, where his enemy could reach him, when old Ring's victory was quick and complete. Not infrequently did the family thus secure a dish of savory meat. In that wild country larger game also was quite plenty. Though my father had, on one occasion at least, to drive a bear almost from his door in the day time, I do not remember, in my boyhood, to have seen that animal. Deer were quite common, and I remember that on one occasion a beautiful little fawn came up very near to me and then darted away.

The most exciting scene in connection with the game of those early days which I can recall was the treeing and the shooting of a wildcat. Early one morning a furious baying of dogs was heard near the edge of the woods, not far away.

Ring rushed to meet the oncoming train, and the game, hemmed in, as it was, went up the nearest tree. Soon one of our neighbors arrived with his gun and brought it down—a huge cat with his short tail.

This old Ring, of whom we were all very fond, undertook the journey with us when, in 1833, we emigrated to Vermont. Whether he was not well fed and left us voluntarily, or whether he wandered and could not find us again must have remained a secret with his dogship. Be that as it may, after going with us, if I mistake not, some fifty or sixty miles, he disappeared. We afterwards learned that he succeeded in making his way back to his old home and was taken in and kindly cared for.

Here It was when I was about ten years old that I first went from home for a few weeks and worked for a distant neighbor, driving oxen, doing chores, etc. Then I had my first, and I believe my only, severe attack of homesickness. I doubt whether I shed any tears, and I know that I tried to conceal the bitterness of my heart. I wanted to be called brave.

As may be inferred from what has been said, our family was very poor. The people of that region were generally poor. In a few years it became a noted dairy region, and a great change for the better resulted. I think it must have been in 1831 that my father's well-to-do brother visited us, and that may have awakened a desire on the part of my parents to return to Vermont.

I even now blush at the thought of our journey. We started very quietly, late in the night, and made a very long drive without stopping. I do not think that either of my parents had any desire to defraud any creditor, but there were obligations that it was not possible for them to meet. The remaining there could not help matters. It might be better every way if we made the change. Surely it did not seem as if it could be worse.

A remarkable meteoric shower fixes definitely the date of this journey. I think it was in the early morning of our second day that occurred one of the most brilliant displays of meteors on record. This was Nov. 13, 1833. It is said that the meteors "came so thick as to be described as a fiery snowstorm."

I think it was when we were near Schenectady, N. Y., that I first saw the railroad cars. I find it recorded that in 1830

there were in operation, in the U. S. of A., twenty-three miles of railroad. In 1833 it had gone up to 380, of which 151 were built that year.

It was Thanksgiving Day, 1833, that we arrived at my uncle's in Thetford, Vt. I do not think that our relatives were pleased at our arrival. We were indeed very destitute. We had neither cash nor credit, and one horse had taken us all (my father and mother, my sister and myself), with all that we had, over the hills and mountains of our four days' journey.

It would be proper to say that here ended my child life. To me personally I suppose that this removal was a very great blessing. My uncle (Samuel F., Esq., my father's brother, two years older than himself) was very kind; gave us a house in which to live, and we had our fire wood for the cutting, and received many favors. Still, we had for a time more pinching poverty than we had before experienced.

Among the saddest of those memories is that of our makeshift for beds. I spent a good deal of time with my father in gathering "cat-tails" (a kind of rush), and stripping off the downy fur, which served us in place of feathers. There was some snow, and December in Vermont, even when there is a bright sun, is pretty cold. My fingers almost ache now as I think of those "cat-tails."

In the winter of 1833-4 our home was at what was known as the "old Falet Farm." This was on a road but little traveled and a mile and a half from the school-house. At this time I began to feel a lively interest in stury. Though so far away, and though the snows were deep, I doubt whether I lost a day of that winter's school. I remember that I used to improve the hours of the long evening in studying by the light of our big fire. We could not afford to burn a tallow candle.

In those times we had what were called winter and summer schools. The former were taught by men, the latter by women. Each continued about twelve weeks. I attended both of these schools in 1834, and again in 1835. In the intervals I made myself useful by working with my father at various kinds of work on the farm, making or repairing fences, chopping wood, picking up potatoes, etc. Oh, how my back did ache at this last!

In the summer of 1835, when not quite thirteen years old, I

did one of my best things at farming. I planted and took all the care of a field, and finally dug and put into the bin in our cellar 150 bushels of potatoes.

The first military display that I can recall was in the village of Greene. This, though a small affair, filled me with astonishment. As we came in sight of the assembled hosts (perhaps 100 or more) a companion about my age and as intelligent as myself, exclaimed, "How many mans!" In 1835 I had the great pleasure of attending a "general muster." I suppose that a regiment must have been assembled for a day's drill and sport, and probably more sport than drill. I walked some four or five miles to attend this grand display. The music, the crowds of people, and especially the gingerbread stands, interested me very much, but, above all, the peddlers crying their various wares. I remember that one, in selling suspenders or braces, cried out again and again, "Long enough for any man and short enough for any boy, and they will stretch like an old woman's conscience." This struck me as very funny, despite the evil implication. I am not sure whether it was this same wag or another, who, in selling a paper of pins, repeated some doggerel, of which two lines cling to my memory after more than fifty-five years, viz:

"To give each fold its proper place,
To bind the slender, tapering waist."

One of the oddities of that day which I still remember was that "Old Esquire Niles" drew up with a horse and a donkey harnessed together.

Everek, July 2, 1891.

Dear Children:

Eight days ago, at the old Caravansery, I began the above notes, and they have been continued at Kara Hissar, Nigde and other places as I could find spare moments. Rev. U. Jenanyan, of Tarsus, is now with me, and we are making a most interesting missionary tour. But, to return to the "Reminiscences."

Though I do not purpose to follow any very sharply defined lines of division, it seems natural to note my early life under the following:

First, my childhood. The years 1822 to 1833, in the township of Greene, Chenango County, N. Y., reported above.

Second, 1833-1836, at home, in Thetford, Vt.

Third, the time of wandering and indecision, from 1836 to 1841, and,

Fourth, from 1841, when the idea of a liberal education began to dawn dimly, till 1852, the years of academic, collegiate and theological studies, interspersed with manual labor and school-teaching.

From the time of our arrival in Thetford, my advantages for school were better than they had been before, though not very good. The same was true of religious privileges. We rarely attended any religious meetings. There was, however, a part of the year a little Sunday-school which met in our school-house. Of this my good uncle was superintendent. This I usually attended. My lessons were, so far as I can recall, repeating texts of Sacred Scripture.

I must have been about twelve years old when I attempted to read through the Bible in course. Another boy joined me in this, and we worked very hard, though somewhat spasmodically over it. The hard names, in the O. T. especially, were stumbling blocks for us. I remember the beautiful clover fields and the shade of the apple trees where we read, much better than I remember the lessons.

I do not remember that we had in our house any books except the Bible and my very poor supply of school books.

As to newspapers, none came into our family, and very few into the neighborhood. My uncle being a man of some note and a magistrate, took the Vermont Chronicle, and my cousins had the Youths' Companion. But at that time these things were far above us. Few things in our surroundings were fitted to awaken a young mind to much activity. Of course, there was the great book of Nature, but I do not think that I attempted to read it any farther than most dull boys of ten or twelve usually do. I remember that, while I admired the majesty of a thunderstorm, I had little fear, though my sister was anxious to have the steelyards thrown outdoors, lest they draw the lightning.

It was not very long after we took up our home in Vermont that I, with another boy about my age, met a very difficult problem in geneology. We met in my uncle's mill. To my astonishment the boy declared that he was his uncle. We both soon became convinced that he was indeed uncle to us both. If so, then what was our relation to each other. Were we indeed cousins. It seemed to us that it must be so, and

yet, if so, how was it that we had never heard of one another? I know that we parted, fast friends, and I think, with a suspicion that, in some way, we must be cousins. The facts were that while Uncle Samuel was my father's brother, his wife was Ralph's father's sister. Strange that, in the English language we use the same word for these very different relations. Not so in Turkish.

April 1, 1835, stands out in memory very distinct from an unwonted and somewhat presumptuous liberty that I took with my father. Very early in the morning I went with him to the house of our nearest neighbor on one side of us, Uncle Eli Brown, to borrow an instrument with which to tap some maple trees, that we might have some of the nice N. E. sugar.. But "April Fool" was running in my little head. As we were passing along near the border of some woods, suddenly peering among the trees, I exclaimed, "Is that a fox?" My father looked sharply in that direction, and then I quietly renewed my homeward march. After a little I said, with some hesitation: "What day of the month is it?" He saw and appreciated the joke and took it kindly.

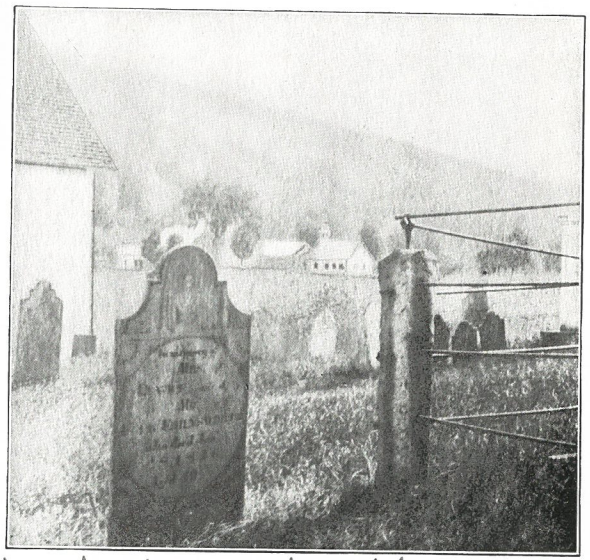
In speaking of the memories of early days you do not expect me to speak alone of things commendable, though I think you will perceive that such things largely predominate. As showing to some extent the state of society in which we lived, I mention certain habits of my parents. With my father the plug of tobacco, from which at all hours of the day he took a frequent bite, was a constant companion. While I think of my mother as possessing a good deal more of natural refinement than my father did, yet I am surprised now and almost shocked as I think of the old clay pipe which was a daily companion and a necessity for her happiness. Still, my impression is that neither of my parents was very peculiar in these things. To give and to take the quid or the pipeful of tobacco was about as common as to exchange salutations. While I was foolish enough to take a smoke now and then at certain portions of my life, I never had any confirmed habit of that kind, or any strong desire for "the weed."

It was, if I mistake not, in the fall of 1835, that I made, for one of my means, quite a heavy purchase, to which I now look back with sorrow. I had managed in one way and another to get about fifty cents. With this, without any consultation with my parents, I bought a four-bladed pocket-knife.

I suppose that I must have had some suspicion that they would not favor such a use of the money. Still, I hoped that when they saw the shining and sharp instrument they would be pleased. Its beauty all was gone when I saw that they did not approve. How gladly would I now make them my counselors!

There are few things of those early days to which I look back with more pleasure than to the beginning of friendship with Carlos Slafter. If I mistake not, it was in the winter of 1833-4, that our friendship began. This has continued, uninterrupted, almost three-score years. We met in the little brick school-house at Thetford Centre. Just how our friendship began I do not remember. He was a year or two younger than myself, but had enjoyed better advantages for study, and was every way fully my equal. We studied the same lessons, sometimes out of the same book, and enjoyed the same amusements. Perhaps the first thing that I remember of him is a little trick in spelling. He said: "I will ask you to spell a word, syllable by syllable, and you will fail." The word proved to be Constantinople. When he come to the "no," though pronounced with an accent designed to deceive me, I discovered the trick and went on to spell the "no." When I saw him in 1887 he recalled some of the boyish pranks of those early days; how we sometimes misimproved our time by swapping fish-hooks in school hours; how that on one occasion, when we made a certain swap, I said that "I had as liefs have mine and a leetle liefser." Whether this was spoken as slang or indicated the state of my vocabulary at that time, I do not know. This very unpretending friend graduated at Dartmouth College in 1849, and has been at the head of the High School in Dedham, Mass., more than forty years.

In the summer of 1835 a very portentous cloud was gathering about our family circle, though it was by such slow degrees that, in my boyish heedlessness, I took little note of it. My mother was a feeble woman when married. Indeed, it was thought by some that she then had consumption and would not live a year. For nineteen years she waged war, with some degree of success, against this enemy, but now it was evident that she could not do so much longer. I remember with some pleasure that I tried to be helpful by washing dishes and doing other things about the house. Late in the Autumn my sister came home from Lowell, where she



My Mother's resting place - 1836

had worked in a factory much of the time the last two years. We moved into another and more comfortable house. A doctor was called in. Though better cared for, she grew weaker. An old lady was called in to act as nurse. It was soon evident that the end was near, and in the very early morning of Jan. 28, 1836, I was called to see the dear one take her departure. She was buried in what is known as "The Old Graveyard," at Thetford Centre, in contra distinction from the new one, which is just back of the Methodist Church. The grave is marked by a dark headstone, which has resisted the storms and frosts of more than half a century remarkably well. By mistake the age is here put at forty, while she lacked but two days of being forty-one. Many years ago I had a spruce tree planted by this precious spot, and when I visited the place in 1887 it was in good condition. It is a fit emblem of a patient and loving mother.

Not many days after the funeral, as the services of the nurse were no longer necessary I took the old lady home. On this occasion I was taught the importance of keeping a firm hold of the reins. I took the old lady safely home, some three miles away, and started back, accompanied only by a favorite dog. Fearing that he might get too tired from so long a journey, I took him into the sleigh. As might be expected, he soon took the liberty to jump out. In doing so his feet were entangled in the reins. Fearing that my dog would be injured, I let go of them. At once my young and spirited horse started off at a lively pace. Seeing that I had no means of controlling him, I threw myself out into the soft snow, and was, like my dog, a pedestrian. The horse brought up at the horse shed connected with the store on Thetford Hill, all right, except a little heated. It so happened that my teacher was there, and, knowing that something wrong must have happened, he jumped into the sleigh and drove back and met me and my dog. He gave me a profitable lesson and I reached home in a very humble state of mind, and fully determined never again to throw away the reins, despite dogs or men.

After a few weeks, about two months, if I mistake not, the family was broken up, and I began, so to speak, a life of independence. My sister returned to Lowell. My father was employed by some one—my uncle, if I mistake not—as a farm hand, and I first went to Col. Garey's, still known as "the

Garey place," on the road from Thetford Hill to N. Thetford. My work here was doing chores about the house and barns. So far as I can remember, I was contented and happy. Two things I well remember.

One, the wonderfully nice milk, or cream, toast. When in Thetford, Nov. 23, 1877, Mrs. Judge Short, the Miss Garey who more than forty-one years before made that charming dish, invited me to her home, and, as a special favor, treated me to a dish of the nicest toast. Though it was very nice, the sharp appetite of the growing boy could not be conjured back.

The other thing to which I now look back with astonishment is a strong desire for some cider. As I recall those days, I see how easily, under certain circumstances, I might have fallen in love with "the cup," which, "At the last, biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."

I did not remain at this place more than about two months, though I do not know why a change was made. It is probable that the purpose of the family was simply to take me till another home was found. I am sure that I was contented, and I think that all the members of the family had only kindly feeling towards me. In the spring or early summer of this year I went to work for a farmer, Mr. John R. Tyler, who lived about a mile north of Thetford Centre. Here, too, though there were no children or young people, with plenty of work and perfect health, I was contented and happy.

Late in the fall of 1836, one evening, after I had gone to my little chamber, I was surprised to hear the people with whom I was living so happily, saying that another home must be found for me, as they could not afford to keep me through the winter. That home was soon found in the family of Mr. Jasper Lord, in the western part of the township, and here for three months I did "the chores," taking care of the horse, oxen and cows, bringing wood and water, etc., morning and evening, and attending the district school, a mile or more away, in the day time.

I was now fourteen years old, and under the pressure of the responsibility of caring for myself. My mind was developing, as I think, somewhat rapidly. I took a good stand in the school, even among those older than myself. My recollections of the teacher of this school, Mr. Sturdefent, are very pleasant. In some way, though I know not how, I think he did much to encourage me. It was at this time that I first

became really interested in reading, and the book which gave me such new and keen delight was "The Scottish Chiefs."

When spring came I returned to my former employer, and remained there again till late in the fall of that year. I cannot now recall how much, if anything, was paid for my services, either this or the previous year. So far as I can remember, I was perfectly contented, though I had an indefinite feeling that brighter days were before me. I could do almost a man's work at felling trees, of which we had a good deal to do, or at mowing grass or hoeing potatoes. I have on the index finger of my left hand a bright scar an inch long as a reminder that the reaper should handle his sickle with care. The family, as stated above, consisted simply of a middle-aged man and his wife. They had very few if any books and no newspapers. I do not remember that I regarded the place as dull. I had not been accustomed to anything better. I do remember, however, that I often spent a night with some boys of about my own age at a neighboring farm, where we slept three in a bed. I often sat with these same boys till a late hour of the night, on the bank of the Ompompanoosuc River, fishing for pout. On one occasion I caught an eel, if I remember right, about a foot long. What a zest this gave to our fishing! So far as I remember we never caught the second eel. With these same and other boys I spent too much time in the river, and I only wonder that no evil results followed. I often got so chilled by remaining too long in the water that for a long time I would shake as if having an ague fit. Here I learned to swim, an art that it has been a great comfort, in my wanderings, to feel sure that I know, though I am glad to say that I have never been so situated that my life depended upon it.

In neither of the families in which, up to this time I had lived, was family prayer observed, or even a blessing asked at the table. Possibly I am mistaken in the case of Col. Garey, but I think not. The public religious privileges were not much better. My uncle had moved away, and the little district Sunday-school had been succeeded by a Methodist church. This I usually attended on Sunday, but I enjoyed the recess between the meetings much more than I did the preaching. The amens, whether well placed or misplaced, amused me, but I do not think that I was ever inclined to make light of or ridicule any form of worship. It may be that

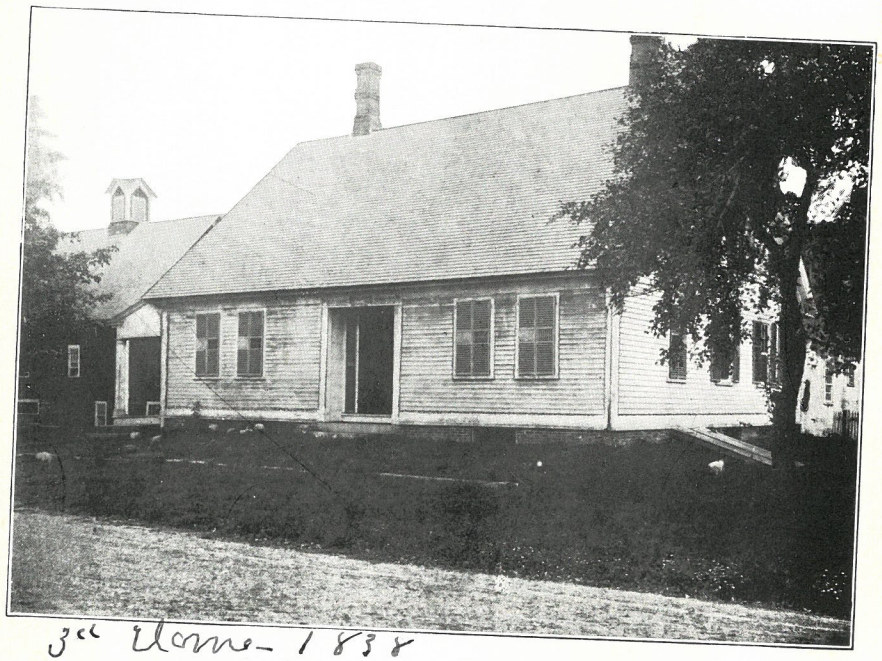
I owe more to those Methodist meetings than I have ever acknowledged. The impression that true piety is not confined to the Congregational Church, or to any one denomination I early received. For this enlargement of views I am thankful.

In the fall of this year (1837) my father took a second wife and established a very humble home in what was known as "the old plank house," which had been the home of my stepmother, Deborah Downer. It might be said that my father married into the family, for it was the home of my stepmother's aged and dependent father, a pensioner of the War of the Revolution. Neither my sister nor myself was pleased with his marriage, as there was a difference in age of twenty years. Still, I think we treated her with that respect that her position deserved, and I am glad to believe that she loved me hardly less than she did her own boys, of whom she raised a family of four, besides one daughter. Their married life was nineteen years, as his previous married life had been. My father died in Wakokee, Tillman County, Minn., Jan. 16, 1857, aged 66 1-2 years, and my stepmother in Minneapolis, Minn., Nov. —, 1889, aged 80 1-2 years. Their whole life was a struggle with poverty, and if, at any time they seemed successful in the struggle, it was only a very short and very partial success.

When the crops were gathered in and the autumn work on the farm was finished, I went to this new home in "the old plank house." Here I remained only about three months, however. I attended the district school, and made good progress in my studies. In the spring of 1838 I had my first term in an institution higher than the district school. This was Thetford Academy. It will be remembered that on my first leaving home in the spring of 1836, I went to Mr. Garey's for three months. In the two years that had intervened great changes had taken place. The father, Col. Garey, had died, and the son, Quincy, had succeeded him as head of the family. In the district school the past winter I was well-nigh, if not quite, at the head of the school in all my studies, and was ambitious for a term at the Academy. The Garey home was a full mile from the school. Doing chores morning and evening to pay for my board, by making the best use of every spare moment, including the walks to and from school, I made satisfactory progress, and my desire for further study was strengthened. At this time I made my first attempt at "speak-

1st Home. 1836. J. R. Tyler.

The Gary place - Home 1836 & again in 1838 - Went to the Academy



3rd Home- 1838
Jack Emersons-

ing on the stage." My sister reports that when quite small, I was sometimes seen practicing my oratorical powers in haranguing the cornstalks or the potato vines. As to this my memory is quite at fault. The piece in which I made my debut in the Academy was, if I mistake not, in blank verse, and began, "All men think all men mortal but themselves." I am sorry that I do not now know who was the author.

One of the reminiscenses of this time I record with shame. Both the man who was now at the head of the family and another young man whom he employed on the farm were in the habit of using profane language. As they were smart young men, it seemed to me that this must be a sort of manly quality, and I began to follow their example. This I did, not when I supposed that they or others would hear me, but to the cattle when, in caring for them, they troubled me. Fortunately I was overheard and properly reproved. Though I might have retorted with the words, "Physician, heal thyself," I did not do so, but was thoroughly ashamed of my conduct, and never after that was I inclined to fall into this low and vulgar habit.

The spring term ended. I was engaged by "Uncle Jack Emerson" as a farm hand six months at (if I mistake not) five dollars a month. This new home was on the Connecticut River, about five minutes walk from the place where now stands the station depot at E. Thetford. Though I was only a hired boy, I was received into the family as the equal of their own boys, one of whom was about my own age. These people were, in some respects, superior to those with whom I had before associated, and, perhaps I was honored a little more for having been a student in the Academy. On Sunday I usually attended meeting on the Hill, where I met more or less of my school companions. It was evident that I was rising in society. I can even now recall something of the surprise and delight as on the 29th of August, I thought of myself as sixteen years old.

While here I met with an accident that might have been very serious. Mr. Emerson had a flock of sixty large, nice sheep. A disease which was called "the foot rot" got among them. They were collected in a shed and a strong solution of corrosive sublimate was being applied to the diseased parts. I was holding the medicine in my hand in an open dish, when some of them made a rush to pass by me for the

door. When I attempted to stop them, one jumped and struck my arm with such force as to cause the solution to fly into my eyes. Of course, to them, it was almost like fire. I was taken at once to a trough of cold water, and bathed them thoroughly. Still my suffering was very great. They took me into the house, where I continued the use of the water, but with no sensible relief. Finally, Mrs. Emerson said: "Milk is very cooling; let him try that." I did so, and the natural result was speedy relief. The white of an egg would have been better, but there is albumen in milk, and albumen is an antidote for corrosive sublimate. Shall we call this a mere blundering onto the right thing by this woman, or shall we recognize it as a special interposition of a kind and merciful Providence?

When my time with Mr. Emerson was up, he counted out sixty shining half dollars, as the reward of my six months' work. What a grand sum of money it was! It was with a sense of the fact that I was an important factor in the family circle that I trudged back to the humble home in the "old plank house." This shining silver went into the family exchequer, and, even with that our funds ran very low. I can remember that I often went to a neighbor's for a pail of skimmed milk. Nothing now relishes as did then the Indian meal hasty pudding with that skimmed milk. I was very happy in my school work through the winter, and, I think, faithful and quite ambitious. My zeal in play was quite as great as in study. This was attended by one accident which cost me a great deal of suffering, as well as the loss of some days of school. We larger boys were playing what we called "trundling the wheel." I do not know whether school boys still play that game. It was about as rough as football. Two parties were formed, and with a wheel about ten inches in diameter, cut from thick board, armed with clubs and bits of board with which to stop the wheel, the game was to see which side would drive the other back. On one occasion, as the wheel was about to pass me, my club having failed, I used my foot for a club. The wheel struck my ankle with great force. Though I suffered a good deal, I remained in school till it closed. To my surprise, I then found myself very lame. It was with the greatest difficulty I could hobble along at a very slow pace. The sun went down, and I was still far from home. As it began to grow dark I was surprised and delighted to see my father coming to meet me. Fearing that I must be in some trouble, as I was always punctual in my return, he had come in search of me. Big boy though I was, he took me onto his back and carried me home, a plump half mile. I am not quite sure whether this was in the early spring of 1838 or of 1839; whether I was 15 or 16 years old. In either case, I must have been a burden that my father could scarcely have carried so far had it not been for his fatherly love.

In the spring of 1839 my father removed to Lyme, N. H., where, according to a somewhat frequent custom of those times, he "took a farm on shares." The terms were, as I remember them, that the owner (Dea. Hambleton) was to stock the farm and furnish half the seed, we to furnish half the seed and do all the work, and the income to be divided equally. This venture may have been a little better than most of those that my father made. I think the family was better housed and better fed than it usually was, either before or after. The place is beautifully situated, less than half a mile south of Lyme Plain, the one afterwards owned by my uncle and cousin. We worked this farm two years. I fear that the owner of the farm was not very well pleased, though I am sure that it seemed to me that my father was too thoughtful of his interests and too little of his own. If this were indeed true, as I still think was the case, it surely showed a failing which "leaned to virtue's side." We kept several cows, and I fear they were not as profitable either to us or to the owner as they should have been. I recall a biting remark that good Dea. Hambleton was reported to have made, and which my stepmother greatly resented, when, in the late autumn he came for his portion of the product of the dairy. It was: "We must eat our bread without butter and smell of our cheese." How much cause for such a remark there was I do not know. Surely work in a factory in Lowell could not fit a woman to be the best dairy maid.

To me personally these two years in Lyme were very profitable. It was my privilege to hear Dr. Erdex Tenney preach nearly every Sunday. He was one of the foremost preachers in the State, and at that time was in his prime. I well remember that we usually thought that his last sermon was his best. I have no doubt but that his influence upon my opening mind was very great. At the same time I

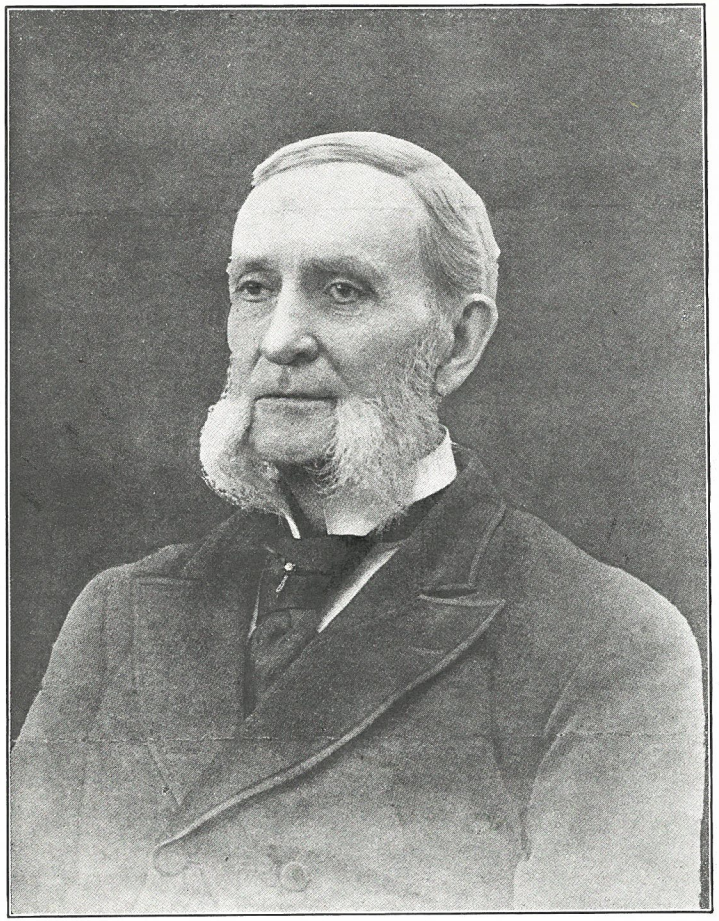
came in contact with some more refined and most excellent people. I remember with especial pleasure the Perry family. Mrs. Perry was the widow of Rev. Dr. Tenney's predecessor. The old lady used to relate long years afterwards, how, when, on one occasion, her cellar was flooded, I went down and fished out things that were in danger of being injured by the water. Of this I have no recollection. I do, however, well remember how very kind and sympathetic this good "mother in Israel" was, and no doubt her children, two girls and two boys, exerted a strong influence over me. Some of them, though younger than myself, were my classmates in school. The oldest son, largely through my influence, I suppose, chose Middlebury College, where he was quite a popular man, and now, for many years, he has been a successful lawyer in Boston. On my visit to America in 1866, he insisted on presenting me with a fifty-dollar overcoat.

The other son, Arthur L. Perry, went to Williams College, where he graduated with honors, and immediately entered the college as a teacher, resigning his position in 1891, after having won a reputation in his special department, political economy, scarcely inferior to that of any man in the country. An intimate friendship with such boys could not but be very helpful to me.

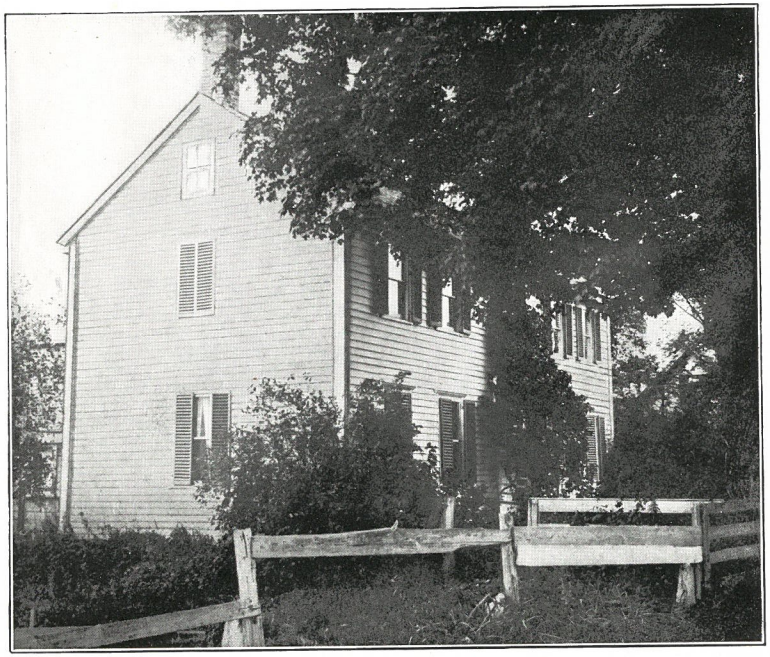
My last experience, as pupil in district school, was in the winter of 1839-40. I remember the teacher, Mr. Jackson, a senior in Dartmouth College, with much pleasure. I think that it was he who first gave me a certificate recommending me as qualified to teach a district school. When spring came (1840) I went to work again with my father on the farm.

In the autumn, Mr. Leonard Tenney, who had just entered his senior year at college, taught a select school in Lyme. My father consented to my attending that school, though I had to work pretty hard morning and evening to keep up the odds and ends of things. This teacher, for whom I formed a warm friendship, many years after became the pastor of the church on Thetford Hill.

My stepmother, when I last saw her in November, 1887, mentioned a fact which I had quite forgotten, but one that interested me as she related it. You can interpret it as indicating a lack of refined sensibility, or as showing a determination, at all hazards, to get a prompt start in the school. Perhaps the two were combined. Shoes had been ordered of a



Hiram Orcutt.



The Misses White. "Sleepy Hollow"
1842

neighbor who was a shoemaker. He did not come to time. I must forego the first day at school or go barefooted. I chose to do the latter.

Among the brightest boys, as well as my best friends, at this time, were the Conant boys. They were among the best in algebra, which with me was a favorite study. I remember them, too, as, for those times, particularly good at playing ball. One of these, David, became a very distinguished medical practitioner and surgeon, a teacher in several medical colleges, and had the very brightest prospects before him. In his early manhood he lost his life from blood poisoning, occasioned by an accident in his medical work. But, for the ball-playing. David, as I said, was a good player, and he was especially good at throwing, a good "pitcher," I think they call it now. I had some skill at catching. At one time, when playing together, his ball struck the end of the third finger of my left hand, severely injuring the first joint. I still remember how, for a long time, I suffered when, morning and evening, I was compelled to milk the cows, but I did not complain. I do not think that I even told of my trouble. As a result of that accident that finger is still slightly deformed. It was at the very time of this select school that the first Presidential election in which I took any considerable interest was held. It was the time of that famous campaign when the war cry of the Whigs was "Tippecanoe and Tyler too;" also "Log Cabin and Hard Cider." I remember with shame an all-night carouse in East Lyme with angry discussions between Whigs and Democrats, the contest whether the Whigs should ring the bell or not, and my rushing with others to pull the bell rope. While all this was disgraceful, there was one thing that I remember with pleasure. With a large party of my schoolmates and others I went to Orford, and there heard a political speech from the then greatest living orator, the world-renowned Daniel Webster.

I had hoped to teach in the winter of 1840-41, but failed to secure a position. I worked a good deal, though, in an irregular way, for Dea. Hambleton, drawing wood and doing other work with oxen. I well remember New Years Day, 1841. We were drawing hay from the neighboring town of Dorchester to Lyme. We put on our loads the previous evening. A heavy storm of snow with wind came on in the night. In the morning it cleared off, but was very cold, and the road

was very bad. By making a very long day we made, if I mistake not, a mile and a half that day. When we reached home the next day I found that my ears had been frozen, but I was proud to find that the scales showed that my load was about a ton and a half.

In the spring of 1841 my father, with his family, returned to the old home at Thetford, and I entered the employ of Dea. Hambleton for six months at $10.00 a month. For the most part my work was of the hardest farm work—digging ditches, chopping wood, and, in its season, haying. I well remember that I was digging a ditch when I heard the tolling of the bell announcing the great affliction of the nation by the death of President William H. Harrison, just one month after his inauguration.

When my time with Dea. Hambleton was out I looked around for a school where I could further prosecute my studies. I learned that my good teacher of the previous year, Mr. Tenney, was to take charge of Hebron Academy, only fifteen or twenty miles away. My good friends, the Conant boys, alluded to above, were going. I knew very well a Thetford family that had moved to that place, and could make my home with them. It was easily decided that Hebron was the best place for me; so, pocketing my summer's wages, I hastened off. How I made the journey I cannot recall, but, I dare say, on foot. Here, for the first time, I went into a family as a regular boarder.

I found at Hebron quite a large and enthusiastic school. Among the pupils there was one that stood head and shoulders above all the rest. This was Mr. A. F. Pike, who developed into a very able lawyer and a United States Senator.

Mr. Tenney's assistant was Mr. Hiram Orcutt, then a senior in Dartmouth College. He was an earnest, wide-awake teacher. I shall have occasion to refer to him again. Probably no man has exerted over me a more powerful or better influence than has Hiram Orcutt, L. L. D. After the lapse of fifty years he is so kind as to send me an occasional letter. When the term closed I made my first effort as a school teacher. This I did in Groton, N. H., some two miles from Hebron Academy. There may have been some thirty-five or forty pupils. At first I had a permanent boarding place, but as the district had but little money in its treasury, I was advised to "board around," that thus the term might be lengthened. This I did

after a few weeks, and still the term was something less than three months. If I mistake not, my salary was $10.00 a month. I think that, on the whole, my effort at teaching was fairly successful. I know that I became a good deal attached to some of my pupils. More than a quarter of a century afterwards I met one of those pupils (Mrs. Dr. Stimson), and it was with great pleasure that we called up the memories of those days. I made frequent visits to Hebron, where Mr. Orcutt had been advanced to the position of principal, and I was an active member of a debating club. The preceptress of the Academy, who afterwards became the first Mrs. Orcutt, told me, some years afterward, that I, at that time, quite captivated her by my declamation of a fine piece of verse in which women and men are presented in contrast. I quote parts of two stanzas as they now run in my memory, after fifty years. I do not think I have seen them since 1842:

"Honored be woman; she beams on the sight,
Glorious and fair as an angel of light;
Angel of Paradise, sent from above,
To be gathered and twined in a garland of love.

"Man on passion's stormy ocean,
Tossed by surges mountain high,
Courts the hurricane's commotion,
Spurns at reason's feeble cry."

My father came for me when my term closed, and I returned to Thetford, and again became a member of the Academy there. The idea of getting an education was gaining strength, and I determined to use the little money that I had in the most prudent manner in prosecuting my studies. I lived in a very slipshod way for a time, rooming at my uncle's, a mile and a half from the school, but more generally on the Hill, and always boarding myself.

There was in that school in 1842 a black-eyed maiden that especially attracted my attention. I do not think that at that time I ventured to speak to her, or that we did more than to exchange glances across the schoolroom. The most definite thing that I can recall of her as I saw her in those days is of the brightest-faced, neatest, trimmest little girl that I had ever seen sweeping the steps before Dr. Kendrick's house

as I passed by. A lasting impression was made and memory never lost that image. That maiden was Caroline Elizabeth Palmer. Providence had then very kindly arranged that she should be my guardian angel, though I knew it not.

I continued my studies as best I could through the spring and a part of the summer. Then I was engaged by Mr. Samuel Fletcher for a month and a half, if I mistake not, to assist in his haying and other hard work of the farm. Some two or three years before this man had been my teacher, and, as I esteemed him highly, it was a great pleasure to be in his employ. But there was a blessing in store for me of which I little dreamed. Though I appreciated it, to some extent, at the time, it looks much larger as I look back to it through this long vista of years, than it then did.

That was the influence of Mrs. Fletcher on my opening mind. She came to the family as a blooming bride while I was there. Though I was but a common farm hand she seemed to look upon me very kindly. To her I owe my first interest in Robert Burns. He has been a great favorite with me ever since she called my attention to "The Cotters' Saturday Night" and "Advice to a Young Friend." She also awakened in me a lively interest in Dickens, who, though at that time only thirty years old, was much admired already by many in America. I think it was "The Pickwick Papers" to which she called my attention.

While here, near the close of the summer, I had a call from my friend Slafter, alluded to above. He, like myself, wished to attend school at the Academy in the fall, and, like myself, wished to make the cheapest arrangements practicable as to expense. He wished to learn whether we could not make our plans so as to live together. This we easily did, and the beginning of the term found us comfortably settled in a dark and dingy room on the ground floor in the L of Aunt Eunice White's house. To our room we gave the name of "Sleepy Hollow." Probably we got the name from Irving's Rip Van Winkle. Probably this term in "Sleepy Hollow" was more profitable than any one that I had before enjoyed. We not only did faithful work in our studies, but we did a good deal of work in solid reading. I remember especially "Hinton's History of the United States." We lived very frugally. I doubt whether we had any bread except the good N. E. "Brown Bread." We had no meat unless a piece was sent occasion-

The Kendrick place - Tpt, Hill - where Carrie Palmer was in 1838.

Store and P. O. that did Burn and the winter of 1843-4 but rebuilt.

ally from my friend's home. The same was true of butter. We had some fruit, and, I doubt not, good milk, though I do not recall that very clearly. I know that we were well and happy. I recall one thing in connection with our fruit. On one occasion we were amusing ourselves by naming apples for each other, and my friend named one for the black-eyed maiden alluded to above. We regarded it as a happy omen that it was remarkably full of seeds.

When the term closed we both secured positions as teachers, my friend in Hanover, N. H., and I in one of the back districts in Lyme. I "boarded around," and had a salary of $12.00 a month. I remember that there were in the school some large and rather rough boys that gave me some anxiety, but I got on with them very well. There was one very bad fellow, however, who, as the term drew near to its close was increasingly disobedient. After the close of school the last day but one of the term, he complained bitterly, with abusive language, of some reproof that I had administered during the day. I told him that if he came to school the next day I should punish him. I hoped he would not come, but he did, and I was under the necessity of calling him out and fulfilling my pledge. Though he offered some resistance, he only fared the worse. I was told that the next year this same fellow, whose name was Gage, took vengeance by beating his teacher. The last I heard of him he was in State's prison. I am glad to say that when in America in 1887 I learned of a very pleasant thing as a result of this winter's teaching. Not long before that time (1887) there was a public celebration of some kind, and many of the Lyme boys assembled in the old home to recount the memories of the good old times. One of them, the Rev. Mr. Converse, of Piedmont, spoke of being one of my pupils and of a strong influence that I exerted in awakening his mind to greater activity.

When this term closed I returned to Thetford and found my cousin, Mr. Royal Farnsworth, sick and in need of a substitute in his school at Thetford Center. I went in and finished the term, but it was very hard for me, and I fear, not very good for the school. Many of the larger boys, only two or three years before, had been my playmates. It was difficult for me to control them. One of them was about as bad as the bad boy just spoken of, and, if I mistake not, like him, found a home in a State prison.

When this school closed I returned to the Academy. Though my mind was pretty well settled as to my future, which was to be the profession of law, I had not determined whether I would first go to college or not. I was now more than twenty years old. Though I had made good progress in mathematics and some progress in Latin, I was far from being ready for college. I had no funds except what I had saved from my winter's wages. My father was so poor that it was utterly preposterous to ask him to do anything for me. I finally decided that I would not attempt to go to college, but would take a short cut to the law, and, with this in view, I entered the office of Esquire Howard, a practicing lawyer in Thetford Hill. At the same time I continued to do something at Latin and other studies in the Academy. In the law my reading was "Blackstone's Commentaries," and I doubt not this was good work for me, and has proved useful.

In the summer of this year (1842) H. Orcutt, my friend and teacher at Hebron, having graduated at Dartmouth College, came to Thetford, and made arrangements to succeed Mr. Stangan as principal of the Academy. He was troubled at finding me studying law, and said at once: "This will not do. You must first go to college, then study law if you wish to do so." My reply was, "It is too late; I am 21 years old, I am poor, and I am not yet prepared for college." His arguments convinced me that it was really very desirable and necessary for me to have a more thorough training before I could hopefully study my chosen profession. Finally I said: "Well, if I can get ready in one year I will go." At first he said "no; it can't be done," but after further thought he said, "You can do it," putting a strong accent on the "you." Of course I knew that by this he meant peculiarly hard work, and I went at the work of preparation with a will.

For a time I fell into a bad habit that seriously injured some weeks of study. That was playing cards. If not hours that should have been given to study those that were necessary to rest were devoted to this amusement, and that in opposition to the laws of the school. I am glad to say that I soon saw the folly of such a use of time, and never played a game at cards after entering college.

At this time (the fall of 1842) Mr. Orcutt took charge of a Sunday-school class, of which Slafter and I were members. In after years Dr. Orcutt referred to the theological battles

that were fought in that class. The teacher was thoroughly "old school." Those views I could never accept. Long and earnest were the battles over decrees, free agency and other unanswerable questions. How much of good resulted from these discussions I do not know. Mr. Orcutt proved a marked illustration of a mental phenomenon, of which there are many examples; a man passing from one extreme view to the opposite. In his old age he adopted the most liberal views, even going beyond what was known as "Andover Theology," and published a little book entitled "Among the Theologies," sharply criticising the various schools of theology, and advancing the extreme view of those who lay special stress on words like "He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied."

Crowded as I was for time for preparation for college, it was unfortunate that I was obliged to spend the winter in teaching, but my necessities compelled me to do so.

My school was the Thetford Hill district, one of the most important in the town. Whether I attempted while teaching to carry on any of my regular studies in the Academy I am not quite sure. I know that I was an active member of the debating club and literary society. I do not think that knowingly I neglected any of my duties as teacher, and yet I did not give my whole heart to the school, as I should have done, and I have never looked back to that term of teaching with very much pleasure.

A calamity of a good deal of importance to the little village on Thetford Hill and of special importance to me occurred early in December, 1843. This was the burning of the only store in the village (Dr. Kendrick's) and also a large dwelling house. It may have been about 9 o'clock of a cold December night that we were startled by the cry of "Fire." I was soon by the burning building. On the second floor of that building was the law office where I had studied. Nearly all my possessions were still there. The office was reached by a flight of stairs from the outside of the building. Calling a friend to help me, I determined with his help to make an effort to save my trunk. I felt very sure that, despite the dense smoke from the fire below I could cross the first room to the second and secure my things.

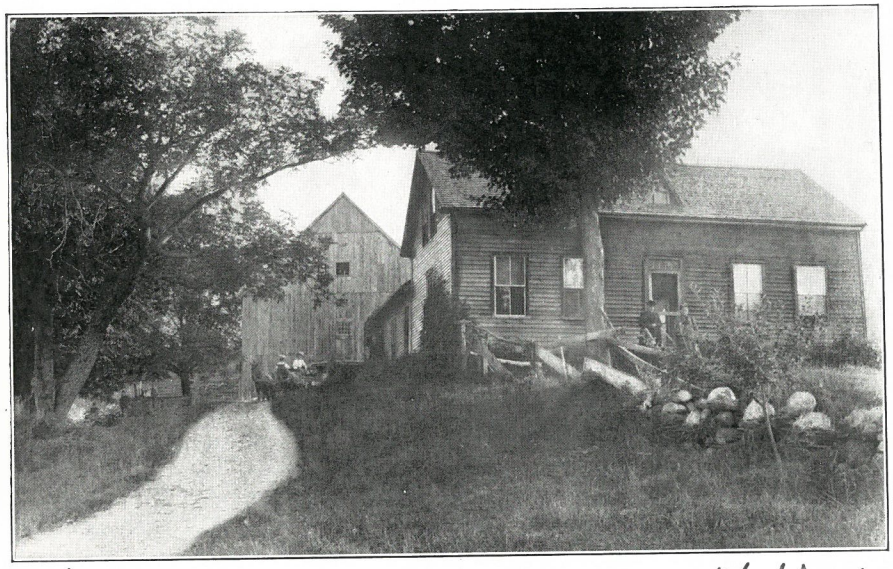
My friend, seeing the great danger, did not follow me. Dazed by the dense smoke, I did not reach the second door,

as I expected to do, but struck the wall at some other point. I felt my way around by the wall till I reached a window. Bursting through the glass with my hands, I got a breath of air, and then made by way to the door by which I had entered. My hands were cut by the glass, and I was faint and exhausted, but no serious trouble followed. I have always supposed that I was foolhardy in entering that chamber and that the probabilities of my making my escape were strongly against me. The finding the window and getting air saved me. Nothing was saved except a few books which I was using and such clothing as I had on or in the wash.

Friends were very kind, and their gifts, I dare say, fully equalled all my financial loss. The letters from friends and other writings and keepsakes could not be made up. The result is that I have nothing, either of my own writings or of any friends dating so far back as 1843, save one letter of December, 1843, received after the fire. I have a series of articles written for our literary society in the winter of 1843-4, but without date. The earliest which has a date is a short composition of March 27, 1844, and to it this note is added: "Written after the commencement of the Wednesday exercise (rhetoricals), by request of Hiram Orcutt, A. B., principal of Thetford Academy." It is headed with a quotation in these words: "Is the adder better than the eel because his painted skin may charm the eye?" The theme is, the folly of judging from outward appearance, rather than from moral worth.

Under the date, April 24, 1844, I find full notes of an interesting discussion which I well remember. The question was, "Would it be expedient for an indigent man who had arrived at 21 years of age, and is designing to study a profession, to go through college?" I took the affirmative, and my opponent was A. E. Marshall, a very bright, red-headed fellow from Lyme, about my age. The question was one of practical interest to each of us, and one that was pressing for an immediate answer. The great thing in my argument was the importance of mental discipline. Other points were well taken. I do not know how much either of us was influenced by the discussion, but in less than five months both of us were in college.

Marshall, after finishing his course at Dartmouth, became a successful lawyer, was "State's Attorney" in N. H., and



"Aunt Caroline's" (The Lord place) E. Thetford.

The Palmer place

The large poplar a sprig Carrie set out before going to Yankton

was a rising man, but was accidentally killed at a Fourth of July celebration (in 1866, if I mistake not).

These old letters of 1843 and 1844 tell an interesting tale by their postmarks. In those days letter envelopes seem to have been unknown. As to rates of postage, I find the mark on a letter sent from Thetford to Lowell, about 125 miles, is 12 1-2 cents, while that on one from Westmartend, N. Y., about 200 miles, was 18 3-4 cents. It was optional with the sender to pay or to let the receiver pay at the end of the route. Better times, however, were at hand, for in 1845 the postage had fallen from 18 3-4 to 5 cents. Very soon envelopes came into general use. It was not till some years later that we had postage stamps. Several letters written by myself to my sister, bearing date from 1844 to 1851, have very kindly been returned to me. The earliest of these, June 9, 1844, shows that at that time I was not boarding myself, as I more usually had done, but that I lived at Dea. Frost's, and paid my board by such work as I could do out of school hours. It shows also that I was distressed at the prospect of being compelled to leave my studies for a time. I said: "Sister, you cannot think how I dislike to leave my studies this summer, but I suppose I must awhile. In about three weeks, probably, haying will come on; then I expect to go out; do not know certainly." My impression is that I managed to get on without going out for more than a few days, but that I remained and pressed on in my studies with all the energy that I could command. In this same letter I say: "I'll tell you what; I have begun this term pretty strong. I am up at about 4 a. m., and retire about 10 p. m." A remark in the same shows that even at that date my plans for entering college were not fully framed. The question lay between Dartmouth and Middlebury. The former was very near Thetford, only eight or nine miles, and such of my friends as were bound for college, Slafter and others, would go there. But it was believed that one might get on with less money at Middlebury than it would be practicable to do at Dartmouth. Board was advertised at from $1.25 to $1.50 per week, and the entire expense for the college year, including tuition, board, room rent, library, etc., was put at $83.00. At the same time the Dartmouth catalogue showed $109. Such a difference made it easy for me to decide in favor of Middlebury.

Middlebury was about eighty miles from Thetford by the

more usual stage route, and sixty by the shorter but more mountainous way. To pay a stage fare would require more money than I could spare, and so, giving my box, which served for a trunk, to the stage driver, to be delivered at Middlebury and pocketing all the money at my command (about $30.00), armed with a recommendation from my good teacher, Orcutt, I started, on foot, for college. Early on the third day I was at the door of President Labaree. I am not sure whether he had been informed that I proposed to join the college, but I think not. Be that as it may, he received me very kindly and immediately took me over to see Professor Stoddard. He was a very fine scholar, whose name was then and long after, very familiar to every one who studied Latin, as "Andrew's and Stoddard's" Latin Grammer was in universal use. He examined my papers and then asked me a few questions in Latin and Greek. I did not think myself very well prepared in the latter, but hoped that I was pretty well up in Latin. The professor frowned and my courage sank. I had not been sufficiently thorough in the work that I had done. However, he was willing that I should try, so the President took me to the college to see what could be done about a room.

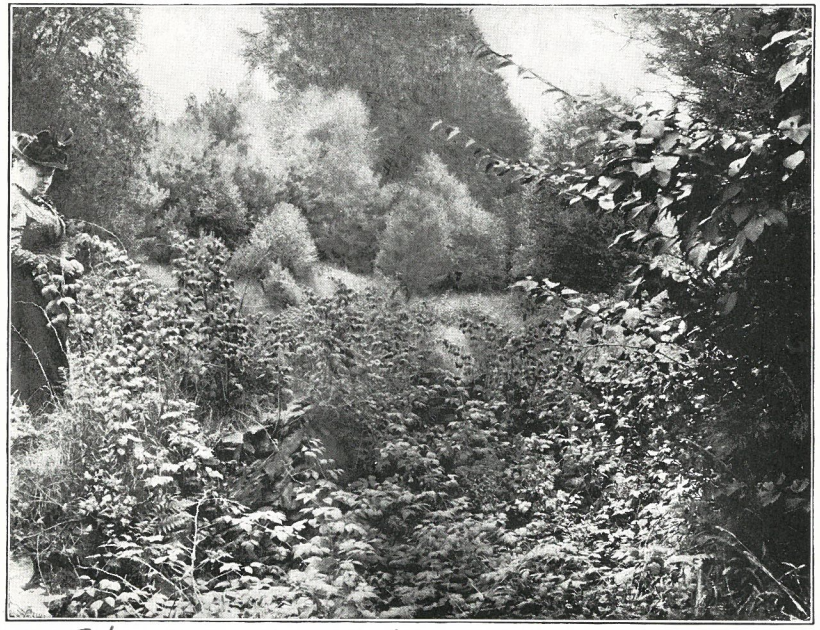
The college term must have begun about the 25th of August, while it was about the 5th of September when I arrived. The President took me to the room of another Vermont boy, a little older and a little taller than, and about as poor as myself, hoping that he would take me in as a roommate. This was E. U. Blanchard. He was anxious for a roommate, as thereby expenses would be reduced, but I looked so rough, with my cowhide shoes and coarse garb that he hesitated. However, he finally took me in, and the arrangement proved so satisfactory to both of us that so long as we both roomed in the college, we roomed together (nearly three years), and when, five years later, we met as classmates again, at the Theological Seminary at Andover, we at once became roommates.

Sept. 14, 1844, when I had been in college about a week, I wrote to my sister: "I board in a club, as we call it. There are five of us who board in this club. Probably our board bill will cost about $1.00 per week. We have no tea or coffee. Our bread, butter and potatoes are good. As to the rest I say nothing." This was pretty frugal board, and yet too expensive for me.

Up to this time I did not claim to be a Christian. Soon after entering college I received very kind letters from Thetford friends, reporting special religious interest in the school and urging me to give myself to Christ. My most intimate friend, Slafter, was one of those who rejoiced in a new hope, and he wrote me, reporting his new joy and urging me to join him in the new life. My good teacher (Orcutt) urged me tenderly and earnestly to give myself to Christ. Others showed the same interest. I am disposed to think that the prayers of these friends and especially of a band of earnest Christian women on Thetford Hill, faithful "mothers in Israel," were answered before the letters reached me. My mind was especially awakened to spiritual things, and I was prepared to receive kindly all the suggestions of those friends. I determined to lead a Christian life and enrolled myself among the Christian men of the college. Still, for many months, I worried over "experience." I did not have that crushing sense of sin that I felt that I ought to have. Not having that I did not have that joyful sense of pardon that I looked for. I wallowed long in "The Slough of Despond." I read such books as "Baxter's Call" and others that the President recommended to me, but the one experience that I looked for did not come. Often I went to a neighboring grove and prayed for a new heart, but it seemed to me that I returned with the old one. My roommate was in a state of mind much like my own. It was long before we dared say that we were Christians, or to apply for admission to the church. I think that Orcutt's letters were helpful. In one of May, 1845, he says: "I do not believe a person was ever converted in the way he expected to be." Alluding to doubts which I had expressed whether the Holy Spirit had indeed been striving with me, he said: "I have no doubt. There has been a vast change come over your spirit. You are very different in this respect from what you were when here." In his next letter, written in October of the same year, there is evidence that I was growing in confidence of my spiritual life, for he says: "You devote a part of your letter (to him, and to which he was replying) to the subject of religion. It seems a little strange, at first thought, that Mr. Farnsworth writes about the interests of the soul, a heart polluted by sin, and a love of meditation and conversation on spiritual things. But it is a matter of great joy to me that it is so." He goes on to

urge me to join the church, and also to seriously consider whether it be not my duty to study for the ministry, rather than become a lawyer. This subject, viz, the great importance of my deciding in favor of the ministry, he urged in other letters. I am sorry to say that I neglected to join the church till July (I think it was July 4), 1847, and as to the decision as to a profession, it was by slow degrees that I came to the conviction that it was my duty to study theology.

I had not been in Middlebury many weeks before I made the acquaintance of the Palmer family. They then lived in Cornwall, about four miles from Middlebury. This was a pleasant walk of an hour or so. Mrs. Palmer was a Thetford woman with a large circle of relatives, with many of whom I was well acquainted. Indeed, some of them were my most intimate friends. It so happened that I had a classmate (Remele) from Cornwall, a neighbor of the Palmers, and on Saturday p. m. I walked home with him, and he introduced me to the Palmers. I found Mr. and Mrs. Palmer very cordial. There were then three young ladies in the family, but it so happened that none of them were at home. I was especially anxious to see the one whom I had seen in Thetford, but was obliged to wait a few weeks. From this time till I finished my college course there was no place that I visited with so much pleasure as I did those friends in Cornwall. I am not quite sure whether it was at the time of this first visit, or whether it was a little later that Mrs. Palmer gave me a petunia, well rooted, and that adorned a window of my study for many months. I am not sure but it did till the end of my college course. Was this a fit emblem of what she was to furnish for my future home?



Place of the Palmer Home E. Orford, N. H.